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THEODORE W. NOYES, Editor

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The Agreement With Carranza.

The President's prompt acceptance of Carranza's proposal for reciprocal privileges of "invasion" puts the case with the de facto government of Mexico on its best possible basis. It is to be noted that Secretary Lansing's note to this effect states the acquiescence in terms of "permission for military forces of the de facto government of Mexico to cross the international boundary in pursuit of lawless bands of armed men who have entered Mexico from the United States, committed outrages on Mexican soil and fled into the United States." This establishes a perfect reciprocity inasmuch as the United States proposes to enter Mexico to pursue bandits who have entered this country from Mexico and fled back into that land. Thus each side has the right, according to this agreement, to chase back into the country of its origin a lawless expedition.

Secretary Lansing's note is susceptible of no other interpretation by the Mexican authorities than as a sincere expression of good faith and confidence in the friendly and helpful intentions of the de facto government of Mexico. With it must be read the Secretary's announcement, made simultaneously with the dispatch of the acceptance of Carranza's proposition, to the effect that in no circumstances will the military operations now contemplated by this government be suffered to "trench in any degree on the sovereignty of Mexico or develop into intervention of any kind in the internal affairs of our sister republic." If this is not enough to persuade the Mexican people to whom it can be correctly conveyed there is the additional assurance that "what is now being done is deliberately intended to preclude the possibility of intervention."

If the Mexican people were as freely supplied with news as are the American people, if they had the same organization for the spread of information as this country enjoys, this announcement would be known today through the land. Unfortunately, the Mexicans as a body are not a reading people, and are dependent for their news upon oral reports. If Gen. Carranza can and will spread broadcast by proclamations and by couriers throughout the territory controlled by him his acceptance of the act of this government in the fullest confidence he will have done much to prevent acts of hostility toward the American forces when they appear on Mexican soil.

The danger in this situation lies in this very difficulty of making the Mexican people understand that the present expedition is for the specific purpose of catching an outlaw who has committed an unpardonable crime and for whose capture and future restraint the established and recognized government of Mexico gives guarantees.

No way presents itself of requiring Mexico to ship back the arms which were allowed to go over with the expectation that the generals would fight it out among themselves.

There should be some satisfaction in contemplating the amount of trouble this country could have gotten into in the past year or two, had it been so disposed.

Comparisons of Villa to Aguinaldo entitle one of the mildest and most law-abiding Philippine citizens to some redress.

A Lesson in Unpreparedness.

When the word came last Friday that the administration had decided to send an expedition into Mexico to punish Villa and his men for their slaughter of American citizens at Columbus, an idea seemed to prevail throughout the country that that very day a column of troops would march across the border and begin the pursuit. Much criticism has since been voiced as to the slowness of the procedure. As a matter of fact, however, there is no occasion for criticism save as to those who are responsible for the unpreparedness of this country for such an emergency.

An expedition of this character is no weekend hike of a few thousand soldiers assembled and rushed into line. The units must be drawn from various posts and supplies must be gathered and transportation provided. The column must carry its own provisions, ammunition, food and shelter. It must be capable of maintaining itself at a distance from base. The quartermaster and commissary work for a force of four or five thousand men for a purpose of this kind is in itself a serious undertaking.

Besides sending the column into Mexico for the pursuit of Villa provision must be made for the safeguarding of the border in the absence of these troops who normally would stand on guard against incursions. This means the transport of troops from far distant points, in replacement of the expeditionary force. If all this work is

done within a week from the time of the decision an excellent record, in the light of the existing conditions, will have been made.

The country has been given in these few days a most vivid object lesson in its unpreparedness for an emergency. Our process of "mobilization" on a greater scale to meet a sudden foreign attack can be imagined in the light of what has been happening since last Friday. Stronger than any of the arguments of those who are urging adequate national defense in the national legislative halls and in meetings of citizens stands this simple fact that for the punishment of a bandit who has raided a border town and killed our people the better part of a week has gone by in making ready and at that on a scale by no means commensurate with the potential difficulties ahead.

President Wilson yesterday urged Congress, through the leaders, to speed up on the preparedness bill. Measures are awaiting action in both houses. At the present rate of progress it will be months before a consistent national defense program is worked out in terms of legislation. Probably now there will be quicker action, but the danger is that action in a hurry may lead to mistakes. The hope of the country is that Congress will act promptly and wisely, not merely to meet this emergency, but to make the provisions for adequate national defense that are demanded by every consideration of security.

Uncle Sam First.

In the conferences between the President and party leaders in Congress respecting the legislative program and speed the element of bluff probably enters to some degree. Bluffing is legitimate play in both of the great American games—politics, and the other game, which shall be nameless. The President may not be expecting all he is asking of Congress, and Congress may not be expecting the long session to be merged in the short. Each behind the hand is probably smiling at the attitude of the other, and the country will be excusable if it smiles a little openly at the expense of both.

The President's program is long—too long—and unequal. He could reduce it by half without injury to his prestige, or to the country's welfare. Some features are important to the point of imperativeness. Preparedness for example. The beginnings of an adequate national defense should date from now. Nothing should delay them.

Some features are not only unwise but dangerous. The proposed scuttle from the Philippines for example. That proposition would deserve censure in any circumstances, but is especially censurable in the circumstances that exist. This of all times is not the time for the consideration of that question. Certainly conditions in the far east are sufficiently disturbed and uncertain without any help from us. Why throw the Philippines into the melting pot? Who, in Congress or out, really believes that in two or four years the Filipinos will be ready to establish a stable government? Is it not the confessed object of the supporters of scuttle simply to wipe their hands of the whole Philippine matter, regardless of what may happen in or to the islands after the American flag comes down?

But, at last, the main point is this: Congress is in session, and should remain in session while public business requires its attention. Uncle Sam first. The national conventions are important, but the presidential tickets can be nominated with Congress at work. Later, Senator This and Representative That may be uneasy if kept away from their campaign for reelection; but if it appeared that they had helped hurry Congress to a close in order to attend to their personal fortunes they would hardly benefit from the record.

Forty years ago much use was made of a striking sentiment. "He serves his party best who serves his country best." It is as true now as then. The current form of expression is quite as felicitous if shorter and less stately. Uncle Sam first.

Great stress used to be laid by T. R. on the rhetorical changes which could be rung on "be good and you will be happy." And yet the colonel does not seem so very happy.

The situation in Mexico can be approached without delay in ascertaining the exact international status of the submarine.

The commander who torpedoed the Silius is confronted with a job of explanation that should make the ordinary investigation seem easy.

German laboratories have done wonders, but they cannot produce flour or potatoes.

The Mexican border just now is recognized as no place for a pacifist.

The Fourth Week at Verdun.

Yesterday's comparative lull in the fighting at Verdun, at the beginning of the fourth week of the assault upon that French position, is regarded in both London and Paris as but a prelude to a renewal of the German onset with perhaps even greater fury than before. French reports indicate that the Germans have brought up heavy reinforcements, numbering, it is estimated, 100,000 men, to repair the losses and to strengthen the lines. Meanwhile the artillery is conducting an exchange of fire which is described as the most furious of the war. This fire is intended to demolish shelter positions and to destroy artillery emplacements. It has, moreover, another design, to demoralize the enemy. If the French reports are to be accepted it is of equal intensity on the two sides,

and there is no direct advantage for either as a result of this enormous expenditure of ammunition. If the Germans, however, succeed in breaking down any of the French defense lines by their pulverizing artillery fire it is possible that in the infantry charges to come a gain may be effected. The capture of Verdun is evidently the specific German objective, but Verdun is of no particular importance itself. The moral prestige of this accomplishment would be unmistakable, and would perhaps compensate in domestic stimulation and reassurance for the losses which have been involved in the attack. But a mere bending back of the French line, even from San Mihiel to the Champagne, thus obliterating the entire Verdun salient, would not be of any great military importance so long as that line is held intact, with its powers of resistance relatively unimpaired. The whole question of Verdun is one of wastage, and if the Germans are wasting men on a larger scale than the French their ultimate winning must be greater than simply the flattening of the salient in order to be justified.

Carranza, having a somewhat temperamental public to deal with, may be compelled to assume that suspicious attitude toward the United States so widely regarded as a test of Mexican patriotism.

Villa is undoubtedly an outlaw, a bandit and a brigand, but fears are entertained that he will secure a following sufficient to install him as a regular Mexican general.

Lavish expenditures are reported for people who are seeking pleasure in America instead of taking a fling in Europe. The income tax is not getting all the loose change.

It is proposed to form an association of theatrical performers on lines of labor unions. The public is compelled to take its pleasures more seriously every year.

Gen. Funston is frank in admitting that he does not regard an expedition in pursuit of Villa as any mere pleasure trip.

Japanese statesmen frankly admit that they are more interested in what happens in China than in events of the European war.

No matter what other questions may arise, the tariff invariably demands its full share of discussion.

Passing examination for Col. Roosevelt's hero list will be harder than any civil service test.

SHOOTING STARS.

BY PHILANDER JOHNSON.

An Observation.

"Are you going to take boarders next summer?" asked the postmaster. "I dunno," replied Farmer Cornstossel. "I know some folks who would like a nice quiet place."

"Yes. But all most of them people want with a nice quiet place is to jump in an' fill it chock-full of their own particular brand of noise."

Erratic.

Oh, Spring once more is on the way. Who, like a reckless wizard, Bedecks the world with blossoms gay. And then turns loose a blizzard.

A Determined Pursuit.

"Did you succeed in increasing the working hours of government employees?" "Not yet," replied the reckless economist. "But I have made 'em put in seven or eight hours a day extra worrying about their jobs."

A Subordinated Ego.

"Are you afraid of war?" sneered the aggressive citizen. "No," replied the cautious person. "But I don't think it's up to me to try to subject a whole lot of people to war's inconveniences just to show that I'm not afraid of it."

The Modern Tourist.

"Did Mr. Chuggins keep a notebook on his travels?" "Yes. But all he wrote in it was the number of blowouts he had and the amounts of the fines he paid."

March.

I heard a grim confession by a highly timorous chap; Quoth he, "In vain for cheer I try While March is on the map. Upon the calendar they run Five Fridays, interspersed With one 12- and 31. Which is the same, reversed."

Funston.

From the Boston Transcript. Somehow it's a heap more satisfying to know that Funston has been sent to Mexico than it would have been to learn that House was going.

Villa's Mistake.

From the Philadelphia Press. Villa didn't get over the border by mistake, but before Funston gets through he will probably realize that it was a mistake that he got over.

The Angle of Repose.

From the New York World. Geologists and engineers at Panama are working to find the angle of repose on the sides of the great cut. Apparently no such angle is in prospect in Mexico.

Gore or Wilson?

From the Philadelphia Record. Perhaps Mr. Gore would have been better, but it happens that the country elected Mr. Wilson to be President.

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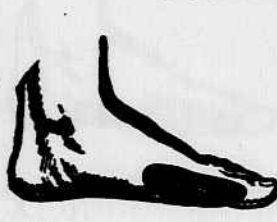
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